

Comments
for
Senator John Kerry's Public Field Hearing
"The Rising Costs of Energy: Challenges and Opportunities for
Small Businesses"

As an entrepreneur, I view the rising cost of energy as an opportunity to create new business ventures. In 2006, I co-founded SunEthanol, a company based in Hadley, MA, which is commercializing a technology for producing clean, renewable ethanol fuel from waste plant matter. At SunEthanol, we view rising oil prices as our chance to change the energy market by generating revenue with new energy solutions that also help the planet.

SunEthanol's exciting, new, technology, based on the work of Dr. Susan Leschine at the University of Massachusetts, will enable manufacturers to turn non food waste products such as wood chips, paper pulp and corn stover, into clean burning ethanol.

SunEthanol - and green tech companies like ours across the Commonwealth - provide many benefits to the Massachusetts economy. We create new jobs for Massachusetts residents and bring millions of dollars of new investment money into the State.

SunEthanol's technology will help lower energy costs for Massachusetts residents by increasing the type and quantity of available transportation fuel.

Most importantly, companies like SunEthanol reinforce the image of Massachusetts as a place where inventions occur, pilot plants are built, knowledge is generated and the future of energy is defined.

But green tech companies like SunEthanol can't do this alone. We need the commitment of government leaders, like Senator Kerry, to support every promising Massachusetts company, in order for our state to become the technical and business engine for the next generation of energy revenue.

I recommend that Massachusetts embrace the goal of becoming energy independent like Brazil did during the '70s oil crisis. What would the economic impact be for its citizens? Not only would our energy be more affordable and less damaging to the environment, not only would we reduce the tax burden for fighting global conflicts, not only would we attract capital and talent to our academic institutions, we would also create jobs and generate revenue and become the poster child for clean and green sustainable places to work and live and visit. We need a catalyst for such a major transformative effort.

A green research campus in Springfield could be that catalyst. This campus would be the start of energy independence for the state and eventually, the

country. Pavilions to study and showcase solar energy and cellulosic ethanol and biodiesel and wind power and geo thermal energy and tidal power would be built. Each Massachusetts institution of higher learning would commit to a pavilion for advanced study of each area of sustainable energy study. And there would be incubators to apply the knowledge and creative ways to showcase the successes.

Imagine the tourist dollars that would flow into our state from all over the world if we built a state of the art campus with solar tramways and wind powered buildings and plug-in electric rental vehicles to get around.

Imagine the publicity that Massachusetts would get as it declares itself to be a year-round destination for experiencing the latest green technology and for conducting training and education for kids and green-think retreats and conferences.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts may not have oil wells, but we do have other wells: wellsprings of creativity, educational excellence, biotechnology, entrepreneurship and passion for discovery and for deployment of ideas.

I encourage you to engage in BIG out of the box thinking. I encourage you to fast track incentives for the development and release of Intellectual Property from Massachusetts institutions into the hands of capable entrepreneurs and Massachusetts-based businesses. I encourage you to support think tanks and policies that promote a collaborative spirit like no previous collaboration among in-state companies and in-state research facilities. I encourage all interested parties to SEIZE this moment in time.

To the victor will go the spoils. With the help of forward-thinking leaders like you, Senator Kerry, Massachusetts will be a 21st century green technology powerhouse.

Thank you.

Jef Sharp, Pres., SunEthanol.Inc.